

Embodying Police-Free Futures

Tori Breen

Submitted under the supervision of Ananya Chatterjea to the University Honors Program at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts, *summa cum laude* in Dance.

12/11/2020

ABSTRACT

Embodying Police-Free Futures investigates how dance can inform and expand conversations on police abolition. The project sought to contribute to the police abolition movement in the Twin Cities by simultaneously tackling these two interwoven questions: How can an embodied investigation of our collective hopes and fears about police abolition further our personal activism? How can live embodied demonstrations of police-free worlds connect with audience members whose positions on police abolition are wide-ranging? My research culminated in the creation and sharing of *Practice*, a 40-minute-long dance work in collaboration with local dance artists Sarah Abdel-Jelil, Hannah Pierce, Lu Chen, and Ansel Langmead. With clear communication, mutual commitment to safety, and constant re-evaluation of COVID-19 safety protocols, we were able to move through the process with no COVID-19 spread traced to *Practice* rehearsals or performances. *Practice* was performed on October 17th, 18th, and 24th with a total of five shows, each at full audience capacity. *Embodying Police Free Futures* was a deep investigation into how dance can contribute to the police abolition movement, how abolition can be embodied and processed in white and non-Black bodies, and how live improvised performance can communicate alternate realities and futures. When discussing police abolition and planning for our collective future, we often look to words, statistics, and reason. By centering our bodies, which already hold feeling and knowledge that our intellects may not recognize, *Practice* operated on intellectual, emotional, and physical levels. *Practice* created space for personal reflection on police abolition and embodiment by artists and audiences and brought people into community, potentially re-energizing audience members around the police abolition movement in the Twin Cities.

INTRODUCTION

How can dance inform and expand conversations on police abolition? Grounded in this central inquiry, *Embodying Police-Free Futures* sought to contribute to the police abolition movement in the Twin Cities by simultaneously tackling these two interwoven questions: How can an embodied investigation of our collective hopes and fears about police abolition further our personal activism? How can live embodied demonstrations of police-free worlds connect with audience members whose positions on police abolition are wide-ranging? For this project, I engaged in research through numerous forms while centralizing embodied and danced research, which culminated in the public sharing of *Practice*, a 40-minute-long dance work. Abolition involves decentralizing power, so rather than being a sole creator of *Practice*, I chose to work in deep collaboration with local dance artists Sarah Abdel-Jelil, Hannah Pierce, Lu Chen, and Ansel Langmead.

Informed by readings, the work of other artists, and the experiences of collaborators, *Practice* honed questions around embodying police abolition. When discussing police abolition and planning for our collective future, we often look toward words, statistics, and reason. By centering our bodies, which already hold feeling and knowledge that our intellects may not recognize, *Practice* operated on intellectual, emotional, and physical levels.

In this project, the artists of *Practice* asked these questions of ourselves: What does police abolition require of our bodies? What does a police-free world feel like? What does it look like? How do we get there? What scares us about police abolition and what do we need to move forward in spite of those fears? What abolitionist models and tools already exist in our bodies, our towns, and our histories?

INTENT AND POSITIONALITY

Practice builds off substantial research and lived experience establishing the urgent need for police abolition, but does not endeavor to prove this necessity. Rather, it works from the assumption that policing is not an acceptable reality and engages collaborators and audiences in a deep dive into the

community resources we need to support and develop in order to replace police and the necessary cultural shift of many communities toward mutual care.

Police abolition is centrally an issue of racial justice, and throughout *Embodying Police-Free Futures* it was crucial to return to this fact, especially as an entirely non-Black group of artists. As a presenter reminded participants in a June 2020 webinar hosted by Reclaim the Block, a Minneapolis-based group that works for a redistribution of resources away from the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and toward community-led safety and health initiatives, deep work to destroy white supremacy is required in all of our society's systems, including individuals' internal systems ("About Reclaim the Block")(Reclaim the Block and Black Visions Collective). If all of our systems are not transformed, then the work of shifting resources away from police to community-based social services will result in a reification of other racist institutions, such as social work, healthcare, and education (Reclaim the Block and Black Visions Collective). As a white person in a facilitation role for this project, I was continually confronting white supremacy within myself and working to dismantle it. I and the artists I worked with are implicated to varying degrees in state-sanctioned violence, and because of our historical complicity, the labor of abolishing the police must be ours to take on in accomplice-ship with Black leaders. In this project we sought to take it on with the intention of contributing to Black-led initiatives rather than co-opting a movement.

BACKGROUND AND SECONDARY RESEARCH

In conducting secondary research for *Embodying Police-Free Futures*, I focused on better understanding police abolition, prison abolition, and abolitionist teaching by reading articles, attending webinars, watching videos, listening to podcasts, learning from social media, and participating in protests. I also researched artists and organizations engaging with various issues around the Prison-Industrial Complex (PIC), including but not limited to police abolition. I reached out to many of the organizations I found and was able to connect early in the research process with people who work with MPD¹⁵⁰ and the Minnesota chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) to discuss ways I could be of use to their

work with *Embodying Police-Free Futures*. I later also spoke with someone who works with Reclaim the Block to discuss best practices for responsible community outreach.

Emergent Strategy and *Practice*. adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy* was a powerful guide as I developed my own strategy for activism within this project. I used *Emergent Strategy* as a tool for informing and framing my thoughts on cultivating process and spurring cultural shifts through *Practice*. I was highly influenced by brown's descriptions of organizing as science fiction, inspired by Octavia Butler and Grace Lee Boggs, and as visionary fiction, a concept coined by Walidah Imarisha (brown 9). In the introduction to *Emergent Strategy* brown writes, "science fiction is simply a way to practice the future together" (brown 19). Dance is the science fiction medium of *Embodying Police-Free Futures* and *Practice* is our way of practicing the future together. *Practice* is a group of movement artists imagining police-free futures with hope and fear and working through the many steps along the way to police abolition. brown's statement of science fiction as a practice of the future was the inspiration for the title of the work, with the word "practice" meaning an attempt at getting better, a repetitive action and intentional ritual, something in progress, and a call to action for the audience to engage in their own practicing of abolitionist values (Ibid.).

MPD150 and Artistic Communications of Abolition. Since the Twin Cities' uprising for racial justice in response to the murder of George Floyd this summer, discussions of police abolition have become increasingly mainstream (Cineas). After the police murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, I began to learn more about the contemporary police abolition movement, the functions of policing in the United States, and the history of the Minneapolis Police Department. Much of my learning about policing in Minneapolis was facilitated by social media information sharing and organizations including Reclaim the Block and MPD150. In 2017, the collective of activists who comprise MPD150 released *Enough is Enough*, a performance review of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) on its 150th anniversary (MPD150 8). The report chronicles the racist foundations of MPD, the continued failure of MPD to

protect Minneapolis communities from harm, the repeated violence against BIPOC individuals perpetrated by MPD officers, alternatives to policing, and the potential for police abolition in Minneapolis (MPD150 7). *Enough is Enough* was accompanied by a 2018 art exhibit titled *Making It Real* and an expanded version of *Enough is Enough* released in 2020 during the uprising in the Twin Cities (“About” MPD150).

This project operates from an understanding that police and prison abolition is necessary, and is not focused on presenting research justifying abolition or offering a history of the modern abolitionist movement. However, several sources heavily shaped my understanding of police abolition, thus shaping *Embodying Police-Free Futures*. The 2017 *Enough Is Enough* report, along with the expanded and revised 2020 version, has informed much of the common language used in the Twin Cities around police abolition and building a world without police (Florido). *Enough Is Enough* provides a history and performance review of the Minneapolis Police Department, a summary of current MPD practices, a case for abolition over reform, and strategies for building a Minneapolis without police (MPD150 7). In *Enough is Enough*, MPD150 established five essential findings supported by their research and data collection :

1. “The police were established to protect the interests of the wealthy, and racialized violence has always been part of that mission.
2. The police cannot be reformed away from their core function.
3. The police criminalize dark skin and poverty, channeling millions of people into the prison system, depriving them of voting and employment rights, and thereby preserving privileged access to housing, jobs, land, credit, and education for whites.
4. The police militarize and escalate situations that call for social service intervention.
5. There are viable existing and potential alternatives to policing for every area in which police engage.” (MPD150 37)

My encounter with the 2020 MPD150 *Enough Is Enough* report inspired my decision to pursue an embodiment of abolition. The use of clear graphics, poetic language, and visual art to convey both the

need and possibilities for police abolition led me to realize that dance could be another artistic tool for exploring police abolition. Live dance performance can depict people navigating complex social dynamics in real time and make imagined worlds feel present and real. So much of the work of abolition is in future-visioning and then finding ways to plan and build toward those abolitionist futures (MPD150 29, 36). Doing this requires communities of care and responsibility, dynamics that dance can articulate in group work and improvisation.

Values of narrative, future-visioning, and multiple ways of learning are embedded in MPD150's work, the authors emphasizing their commitment to narrative and storytelling in the forward to their 2020 report (MPD150 5). *Practice*, while not employing a linear narrative structure, relies on stories and inner dialogues personal to each artist, and *Embodying Police-Free Futures* privileges forms of knowing and sharing, like storytelling, that tap into emotion and lived experience in ways that data usually does not. *Enough Is Enough*, in addition to MPD150's other work, first diagnoses a problem and then uses imagination to offer existing and possible alternatives to policing and visions for a police-free world (MPD150 7).

MPD150 engages narrative and storytelling through various mediums, including zines, graphics, comic books, merchandise, social media content, and an audio version of *Enough Is Enough*. In 2018, MPD150 curated "Making It Real," an art exhibit featuring local artists ("About" *MPD150*). The exhibit included a visual art gallery and panel discussion, an open mic, and a community conversation, all intended to "bring MPD150's 2017 report... to life, creating a space in which people could both walk through representations of the past while also imagining what the future might hold" ("About" *MPD150*). Through these various forms of communication: data-based, narrative, visual, audial, and interpersonal, MPD150 is able to share ideas more broadly and compellingly, making police abolition concepts personal, emotional, and accessible. In *Embodying Police-Free Futures*, I sought to expand upon this multiplicity of learning tools by focusing on the body as a site of knowledge production and dissemination.

Art and Police Abolition In The Twin Cities. Art forms including music, visual art, dance, and numerous others have long been central in the fight against police brutality whether in galleries, in the streets, or on stages. In some instances, the mere existence of dancing is a protest in and of itself. Numerous articles have been written about the presence of dancing at protests for racial justice during the summer of 2020, including *Dancing Bodies That Proclaim: Black Lives Matter* by Siobhan Burke and *The Revolution Is in the Streets- And It Slaps* by Delilah Friedler and Camille Squires (Burke) (Friedler and Squires). Dancer and scholar MiRi Park created an extensive Google document to compile instances of dancing at protests around the world from May 28th through July 23rd following the murder of George Floyd (Park). In my experience at recent Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis and in the estimation of Burke, Friedler, and Squires in their articles about dance at Black Lives Matter protests, dancing is vital to protests and can demonstrate joy and resilience (Burke) (Friedler and Squires).

A full history of art as resistance to state violence is outside of the scope of this project, so my research is directed toward recent artistic work by Minnesota-based artists that addresses police abolition and police violence. In the Twin Cities area, artists including Joe Davis, Junauda Petrus-Nasah, Guante, Jacob Yeates, Ricardo Levins Morales, Shá Cage, E.G. Bailey, and Sishir Bommakanti have addressed state violence in recent work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, several of these artists have also been heavily involved in MPD150's work of storytelling and artistic communication, including Ricardo Levins Morales, who is one of the original organizers of the project (Nonko).

There are also multiple local arts projects that work to illuminate and imagine more just futures. *Behind the Blue Line* is a project that tells stories about police violence and abuse of power by police in Minnesota. The collaborative project by Annabelle Marcovici, Den-Zell Gilliard, Joe Davis, and Erica Seltzer-Schultz presents eight damning personal narratives of encounters with Minnesota police through photography and recorded interviews ("About the Project"). This summer, Shá Cage, Tru Ruts, and the Playwrights' Center partnered to create *A MOMENT OF SILENCE: 50+ Black MN Voices in a Historical Moment of Transformation* ("About" *A Moment of Silence*). The anthology holds literary work from Black artists around the Twin Cities. Cage writes that her drive to develop this project came from being

“inspired both by a deep desire to usher forth radical and futuristic realities and moved by the asserting of political power and collective solidarity in the Black Community” (“About” *A Moment of Silence*).

Dance as activism against police violence has a strong presence in the Twin Cities. This November, Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) partnered with STRONGmovement, a Twin Cities-based dance company led by Darrius Strong, for NAZ’s virtual ONE WEEK FOR ONE FUTURE event. For this event, Strong and his company created *Rise Up*, a dance film that deals with themes of resilience, trauma, and police violence (Northside Achievement Zone, STRONGmovement)

In the wake of and throughout the uprising in the Twin Cities, new works of art, artistic collectives, and artist-led initiatives emerged, responding to grief, rage, community need, and calls for police abolition. *Embodying Police-Free Futures* could be considered part of this wave of abolitionist art, though unlike many other artists, I came from a place of relative ignorance to the urgency of police abolition prior to the summer of 2020. Nevertheless, *Embodying Police-Free Futures* is an action in solidarity with the many artists engaging in abolitionist art both in the Twin Cities and around the world.

SIGNIFICANCE

Dance has long been a mode of protest and a way of communicating social issues. However, I observe a scarcity of Western contemporary dance engagement with police abolition. Despite many artists supporting police abolition and protesting in other ways, rarely is contemporary concert dance used as a vehicle for the communication of abolitionist ideas. I do not believe that dance is a better form of resistance than any other, nor do I believe that an artist must make art about everything they care about. However, much like Nina Simone shared in an interview, “an artist’s duty as far as I’m concerned is to reflect the times.” (“Nina Simone: An Artist's Duty”). I believe that it is essential for dance artists to engage with the world that they live in, so it is important to me to contribute to the police abolition movement in as many ways as I can, including by bringing in the honest expressive body as a tool for dreaming and communicating police-free futures. While my research has not uncovered any contemporary concert dance works explicitly about police abolition in the Twin Cities, it is likely that

many dance artists have been influenced by abolitionist ideas and values, and it is also possible that there have been dance works by Twin Cities artists directly addressing police abolition that I was unable to find because of the specific dance communities I am most connected with and my relative newness to the Twin Cities. I do not claim that this is the first dance work centered on police abolition in the Twin Cities, but I can assume based on my inability to find other examples that there haven't been many similar works. Thus, this project may be significant as one of few examples of dance artists in the Twin Cities making contemporary dance work that explicitly explores police abolition.

In my observation, energy around racial justice and police abolition amongst people in the Twin Cities, especially those whose daily lives are not as directly threatened by the Prison-Industrial Complex, has faded throughout the late summer and fall. Some of this slowing was likely necessary in order to keep the movement sustainable, avoid burnout, and protect each other amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. However, action can not cease all together for any individual, especially white individuals or members of other privileged groups. As many white people who felt awoken to systemic racism in a new way this summer lose interest, run out of time and money, or simply forget about anti-racism and abolition, it is crucial to keep momentum going in the police abolition movement. Premiering in mid-fall, *Practice* was well timed to potentially re-ignite a sense of urgency in audience members, serving to stimulate momentum for the police abolition movement in the Twin Cities, especially among newcomers to the movement.

Several audience members noted that *Practice* was the first live show they had seen since March of 2020, making it part of a first wave of in-person dance performances in the Twin Cities during the COVID-19 pandemic and thus significant as a case study in adaptability and safety-centered planning. We took safety measures throughout the rehearsal and performance process and operated with conservative protocols. With clear communication, mutual commitment to safety, and constant re-evaluation of COVID protocols, we were able to create and perform live art with no COVID-19 spread traced to *Practice* rehearsals or performances.

PROCESS

Importance of Process. I entered into *Embodying Police-Free Futures* committed to facilitating a process that was equitable and reflected what I consider to be abolitionist values. In a project that advocated for mutual aid, anti-racism, community safety, anti-capitalism, transformative justice, and localized harm prevention strategies, all values that I believe are central to abolition, it felt crucial to do all I could to enact these values in the creative process as well as the publicly shared product. Process is at the core of *Emergent Strategy*, and brown explains the importance of process when she writes, “what we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.” (brown 53) The group of artists in *Practice* in this sense became a micro-community continually working to live abolitionist values and build skills and experiences necessary for building a police-free Twin Cities beyond our rehearsal process.

Values for the *Embodying Police-Free Futures* Process. In addition to these abolitionist values framing *Embodying Police-Free Futures*, my personal values that guided process in *Embodying Police-Free Futures* included putting people first, sharing some artistic product even if it was not perfect, not sharing anything if I thought doing so would cause harm, paying artists, being future-focused, being specific to our collective, talking about my whiteness and not being race-blind, balancing clarity and abstraction, being COVID-safe, de-centering myself wherever possible, working in intentional collaboration, allowing ample time for conversation, and pushing for movement and embodiment as central forms of processing. Each of these values align strongly with police abolition and support the hard, long work of building stronger communities that make the Prison-Industrial Complex obsolete. Another primary value of *Embodying Police-Free Futures* was trust in the power of live performance as a modality for communication and space-making. Even during the time of COVID-19, it felt critical to this particular project that it be experienced live by at least a small audience. This value would never rise above the value of safety, but it did push me to find creative ways of producing a live show within COVID-19 restrictions.

Envisioning Futures. brown's work on organizing as science fiction was part of my reasoning behind looking to the future of police abolition as a focus of this dance work, instead of centering the piece around the justifications for police abolition. I am interested in dance as a powerful way of imagining alternate realities, because it provides an opportunity to experience different ways of relating to each other and solving problems together. Often, these new futures are difficult to imagine from images or text and can seem distant or even absurd, but when they are experienced body to body, between audience and dancer, they are able to be conceptualized far more tangibly because they are being envisioned in real time, between real dancing bodies.

I also chose to focus on envisioning police-free futures because of my whiteness and my absence of lived experience of police violence and my position of racial, class, and citizenship privilege in the movement. I do not believe it is my place to make art about police violence or racialized violence in general. I don't trust that I would be able to engage with that violence without reproducing it or aestheticizing it, therefore risking causing more trauma. I do feel I can contribute in the visioning: in supporting BIPOC visions, locally specific visions, visions from those who have already been doing this work for many years. I can imagine how we can do better, and I can help other privileged individuals envision futures with more empathy and more radical imagination.

Movement Research. After a period of research through reading, listening, and watching, and after meeting with Ananya Chatterjea, my thesis advisor, I added movement research into my process. I did improvisations around various themes of police abolition, some structured by specific scenarios or words, and others only loosely guided by a reading or a feeling. Selected prompts I set for my improvisations on the embodiment of police abolition included "support, fear, intervention, hope, messy resolution," "gradually and strategically re-allocating resources and responsibility," "flexible organization of the body," "process of not settling," "re-orienting to local community," "white people holding white people accountable," "seeing problems, not covering them up," and "respecting 'no' when help is offered." After each improvisation, I documented specific movements, emotions, qualities, questions, and choreographic

visions that emerged. From these improvisations, I began to develop improvisational scores, some of which were designed to be done solo and others in duets or groups. Many of these scores and early visions are present in some form in the final version of *Practice* shared in October. These notes were documented in a notebook, along with ongoing research from written and audial sources, ideas for piece structure, and rehearsal plans.

Early Logistics. At the same time that I was working through the research process, I was organizing logistics for the work. I began to build the community of *Practice*. I wrote initial descriptions of the project and interviewed interested dancers, offering a \$200 stipend for each dancer. All of the dancers who reached out about involvement in the work were non-Black people of color or white. As a result, the group of artists in *Practice* was a mix of people of varying racial identities, but did not include any Black dancers. When hiring dancers, I did ensure that the group had people of varying racial identities, class backgrounds, and experiences with policing, but weighted the decision most heavily by dancers who, based on our conversations, were committed to abolition and excited about the project. Race shaped what *Practice* became as we worked to understand the best ways for us to engage with the Twin Cities police abolition movement given each of our racial identities. We began rehearsals in late August, rehearsing masked and distanced outdoors or on Zoom when there was a concern about COVID exposure. I planned each rehearsal beforehand, blocking out amounts of time for each section. The rehearsal plan was always adapted in the moment but having the plan allowed me to assess my progress, track the needs of the group over time, and create a record for use in future projects. Other logistics later on in the process included marketing the show, developing a COVID safety plan, determining performance details, and gathering or making materials such as signs, set pieces, and safety tools.

Rehearsal Process. In the first weeks of group rehearsals, we developed our rehearsal culture formally and informally. I created a contract that then underwent revisions with the artists before we each signed it. We had numerous discussions about what we hoped to gain from the process, what made us nervous

about the process, and what we needed in order for it to be a healthy experience. Based on feedback from one of the artists, I implemented a verbal check-in and check-out to open and close each rehearsal as a way of creating a vessel for the often emotionally taxing work, though I was not always consistent with this practice, especially the check-out component. At the start of each rehearsal after a check-in, I shared a verbal Native land acknowledgement and we all engaged in a personal embodied Native land acknowledgment. We then warmed up, often with a shaking and vibrating practice, and then worked on various improvisational scores, alternating movement, writing, and talking. As the work took shape, we spent more time setting movement material, creating internal cues, and finding a satisfying arc for the work.

Between group rehearsals, I found great value in quiet reflection, and so I often set time for myself to lie on the floor with my notebook open and simply let my mind wander. As the piece took shape, I received feedback from several people including Likhwa Ndlovu, a local musician known professionally as Sifiso, Carl Flink, one of my thesis readers, and Ananya Chatterjea. Their comments informed revisions and helped strengthen the work. Receiving outside feedback was a goal I established from the beginning of the process and though I was not able to get feedback from as many people as I had hoped due to scheduling issues, the feedback I did receive was crucial to the process. While I did meet with organizers from MPD150, Reclaim the Block, and SURJ, I had also hoped to be more successful in reaching out to community leaders specific to each of the performance locations in order to broaden the reach of the piece, incorporate the work of other organizers into *Practice*, and connect with communities in more lasting and authentic ways. I struggled to balance this outreach work with the other elements of producing the show, especially in a short time frame, and I fell behind in outreach. As a result, I did not connect with each performance neighborhood as well as I had hoped. With more experience and a more realistic distribution of work, I will be better able to juggle all of these pieces in future projects, and I believe that *Embodying Police-Free Futures* may still be an entry point into future partnership opportunities.

My formal research for *Embodying Police-Free Futures* began in late June 2020 and continued through November 2020. Over the course of these five months, my research and creative process evolved as protests continued in the Twin Cities and across the world in response to new developments, new tragedies, and new betrayals. On September 23rd, the decision to not file charges against Louisville police officers for killing Breonna Taylor was made (Associated Press). At this moment, the sense of outrage and urgency in *Practice* rehearsals increased, and then increased yet again when ten days before the first performance of *Practice*, Derek Chauvin, the MPD officer who killed George Floyd, was released on bail (Chappell). Continued violence should not be a prerequisite for continued activism, but throughout the process of creating *Practice*, while our energy could have waned or drifted into the realm of complacency and capitulation, our commitment to continually engaging with new events and developments in the fight for racial justice and police abolition allowed us to stay focused. *Practice* was also undoubtedly shaped by the impending 2020 U.S. Presidential Election, which was three weeks away at the time of our first show. The failure to charge Breonna Taylor's killers, Chauvin's release on bail, and high levels of uncertainty before the election all informed our work in *Practice* and were embedded in the performances through dancers' improvised movement and words. Now, as I write this paper in November of 2020, my drive to fight for abolition is again refueled by the Minneapolis City Council's approval of almost \$500 million of additional funding for MPD after pledging to dismantle the department just months prior (Turtinen).

Key Creative Decisions. Important decisions about the direction of the piece were made during or between rehearsals for *Practice*, including the use of voice, our performance locations, the use of slips of paper, the use of music, and our intended audiences. From the early weeks of the creative process, I planned on incorporating spoken and written text into *Practice* as a way of offering clarity to audiences. My choreographic interests often lie in abstraction, and I knew that choreographing a piece with movement that was literal enough to directly communicate the message of police abolition would not align with my aesthetic strengths. Using both words and movement, artists were able to articulate their visions and fears relating to police abolition explicitly through speech and abstractly through movement.

In this way, *Practice* communicated with audiences on logical conscious levels as well as kinesthetic and subconscious levels. While this is not always the case in my artistic work, it felt important for audiences to have a concrete, immediate understanding of *Practice* in addition to the somatic understandings that often permeate over time. Rather than indicating a failure of the movement, the need for spoken word in *Practice* indicates a commitment to using all of the tools available to us to fight for police abolition.

The slips of paper which eventually came to function as part of a set for *Practice* were born out of a desire to involve audience members in envisioning police-free futures without placing them in a performative position. Often, audience participation relies on outgoing individuals volunteering to become part of the performance, which can silence other voices and put a performative lens on participation. By asking audiences to simply write their reflections at any time before, during or after the performance, people were able to modulate the experience for themselves, making it consensual and personal. The dancers then placed the audience's written contributions on the ground throughout the show, the slips of paper becoming part of the landscape of the performance, a symbol of collective visioning of police-free futures.

Throughout the rehearsal process, we discussed our relationship to the audience and who we wanted to be in our audience. I hope that the personal nature of the questions we asked in the work, regarding each person's specific relationship to police abolition, allowed *Practice* to be valuable for people of any race and many different backgrounds and identities. However, in addition to broad resonance, I wanted to be intentional about audience so that we could engage audiences that we felt would be particularly strategic for us to target with *Practice*, in pursuit of greater reflection by audience members on police abolition in the Twin Cities. Through group conversation, we identified people who may be intrigued by police abolition but not convinced of its viability as one of our core audiences. Working with people who are not fully in favor of police abolition or who support policing as it currently exists may be more physically and emotionally safe for us as a group of non-Black artists than similar work may be for Black people due to the link between anti-Blackness and police violence. In this way, we

attempted to take on some of the labor of abolition activism that is so often put primarily on Black organizers.

Success in engagement with audiences with a range of beliefs about police abolition was evidenced by the written responses of several audience members that push back against abolition. It is impossible to know if those people left the performance with a different view of police abolition, but it is nevertheless important that we were not performing for a homogenous audience and therefore had the potential to shift thinking. While we did shape the work for specific audiences that we identified as most strategic, we also wanted the work to be accessible and valuable for people of all races and beliefs. *Practice* was intended to provide enough open space and enough rigor in personal reflection to engage people at varying stages of police abolitionist activism.

The importance of a clarity of intended audience was necessary when talking with Likhwa about his potential involvement in *Practice*. I was excited about the possibilities of improvised violin and vocal work that he proposed and felt that it would enhance the piece but ultimately, we did not have music or a sound score in *Practice*, aside from our voices and the ambient noises of the parks. Likhwa, who is Black, did not feel comfortable joining the process as the only Black body in the space, given the intended audience of people unsure about police abolition and his entry into the process later on rather than being part of the work from the start, when we were having more of the foundational conversations about our intentions for *Practice*. While I had been considering these racial dynamics, I failed to be the one to initiate an open conversation about race with Likhwa and the artists of *Practice*, putting the burden on Likhwa to bring up his concerns with me. This was unfair to him and was not in line with my anti-racist values for *Embodying Police-Free Futures*.

The choice to perform in public parks was both functional and artistic. Our COVID-19 protocols required us to perform outside, but I believe that the work would have been less effective in a theater space regardless of necessity. Public parks are essentially anti-capitalist, yet are sites of police surveillance and violence. Public parks are places of contradiction and complexity: where people live because housing is not seen as a human right, where mutual aid is distributed, where communities police

each other, where access is free, where police are almost always present, where children play, and where communities organize. Our performances in public parks in and around the Twin Cities were shaped by ambient noise, people walking by, children watching, airplanes flying overhead, and wildlife making appearances, all grounding the work in our constantly shifting current reality.

The specific parks chosen for *Practice* performances were Van Cleve Park, Longfellow Park, Aldine Park, and Country Lakes Park. Each of these parks are in a neighborhood in which one of the artists in *Practice* either currently lives or grew up. This choice was made so as to avoid coming in as outsiders with no understanding of the culture of a neighborhood. We originally planned to also perform at Powderhorn Park, as one of the performers lived in that neighborhood. However, prompted by feedback from Likhwa, we reconsidered and made a different decision when less than two weeks before the show, George Floyd's murderer, Derek Chauvin, was released on bail. We talked as a group and one of the dancers brought up the potential importance of reserving Powderhorn Park, just blocks from George Floyd Memorial Square, as a space for grieving, organizing, and anything else that the people most involved in the surrounding communities needed. As a group, we decided that we were not confident enough in our ability to perform at Powderhorn Park and match the ever-changing needs of the moment. In an effort to reduce the risk of reproducing harm in any form, we changed the location of the show and performed twice at nearby Longfellow Park, which allowed audience members in the Powderhorn area to still be relatively close to a performance location.

Planning the Performances. Performance dates for *Practice* were October 17th, 18th, and 24th, with two shows on the 17th and 24th and an extra show time on the 25th reserved as a rain or snow cancellation date. So as to keep attendance for performances under the 25 person limit on outdoor gatherings that was in place in Minnesota at that time, ticket reservations were capped at 18 people. This allowed space for me, the four artists, a photographer or videographer, and one extra person in case of any unexpected attendees. While the shows were free, we accepted donations for the Sanctuary Supply Depot, going towards supplies for unhoused people and encampment residents in the Twin Cities, and the George

Floyd Global Memorial, raising money for ongoing stewardship of memorials to George Floyd around the world. These organizations were chosen in discussion with the artists and based in the importance of public parks, our dancing spaces for *Practice*, in the fight for housing justice, and the centrality of the police murder of George Floyd and the subsequent uprising in our abolition activism and the development of *Practice*. I connected with Sophie Walker, a friend and photographer, to take photos of the show during the first weekend of performances, and my father, Tim Breen, to photograph the second weekend. Sarah Abdel-Jelil, one of the artists in *Practice*, introduced me to Gisell Calderón, a videographer who documented two of the shows. At all shows, as in rehearsals, masks and social distancing were required. We offered free hand sanitizer, disposable masks and gloves, as well as hand and foot warmers and copies of MPD150's *Enough is Enough* 2.0 report to all audience members.

Post-Show Marketing. After the shows, I shared photos on social media, edited video footage and photographs into a full-length video version of *Practice*, shared the video on social media and in emails, and sent a press release accompanying the video to local newspapers and magazines. My intention for post-show marketing was to share the work with as many people as possible within COVID-19 limitations, aiming for safe, intimate live performances and broad, open virtual access. Because *Embodying Police-Free Futures* centered community-building, anti-capitalism, and information dissemination, it was critical that all online access be free and complete.

OUTCOMES

Practice was performed on October 17th, 18th, and 24th with a total of five shows, each at full audience capacity. *Practice* raised \$570 in total, resulting in donations of \$285 each to the Sanctuary Supply Depot and the George Floyd Global Memorial. A link to the video of *Practice* is found in Appendix A. In its final form, *Practice* progressed through the following arc:

1. Improvise movement to the question: What does police abolition require of my particular body?

- a. Start far away from each other and from the audience, gradually move toward the audience and toward each other
2. Hannah verbally and physically shares her visions for a world without policing
 - a. Others begin to move from the 1st score into a score of dancing in response to what Hannah is saying
3. All dancers begin to dance and speak their own visions of police abolition
4. One round of “me” score: a dancer performs a movement involving clapping their hands together, which signals to the other dancers that they want support or community presence, the other dancers respond
5. Dancers continue speaking and dancing visions for police abolition
 - a. Lu and Ansel perform a set duet based on specific aspects of their individual visions
6. All dancers perform the vision unison phrase: phrase developed collaboratively using movements from individual vision-based phrases choreographed by each dancer
 - a. Repetition of the end of this phrase
7. Sarah drops out of repetition and begins tumultuous transition section: Sarah speaks and dances on the fear of a tumultuous transition to abolition
 - a. Accompanied by fast, jagged movement
 - b. Other dancers gradually join her in these fears
 - c. Dancers work with concepts of disorientation and extremeness in their physicality
8. All dancers speak and dance on their fears about police abolition
 - a. Ansel performs set solo on commitment and fear of not being able to commit to consistent abolitionist activism as a young person
9. Fears and visions begin to meld in both moving and speaking

- a. Sarah and Hannah perform a set duet based on individual phrases, with Hannah's phrase responding to a fear and Sarah's phrase responding to a vision
- 10. Fear and vision dancing and speaking builds into urgency unison phrase: set phrase developed from artist responses to a sense of the urgency of abolition and strong drive to create police-free worlds
 - a. Repetition of this phrase to exhaustion, with dancers dropping out of the phrase and re-entering, working with agency and avoiding movement burnout while maintaining momentum for social change
- 11. Sudden drop into locality of abolition score: dancers respond physically to the idea that we can grow a world without police from the tools and solutions that already exist locally, whether that is in our city, our neighborhood, or our bodies
 - a. Importance of returning to what we already know and already have and nurturing what is there
 - b. Lu speaks on these ideas
- 12. Group continues in this score while doing "me" score simultaneously
 - a. Moving away from the audience and eventually finding a collective ending

Because the work incorporated improvisation, each performance of *Practice* read differently, with greater emphasis on different elements depending on the dancers' choices within the score as well as outside factors like audience makeup, background noise in the parks, and weather. This results in each audience member taking a different message away from the performance, even more so than in set choreographed work. While improvisation is unpredictable and can lead to a lack of clarity in some instances, it was well suited to *Practice* because it created a living, changing atmosphere and allowed for personally relevant experiences for both the performers and the audience.

The outdoor setting of *Practice* was enriching for some and challenging for others. Some audience members felt that being in the cold added to a sense of communal perseverance, while others expressed difficulty sinking into the work while cold. Of course, not all audience members will connect

with any single artistic work, and I am more likely to receive feedback from people who did gain something from witnessing *Practice* than those who did not. I believe that *Practice* elicited questions and emotions from observers and pushed them to engage with some of the uncomfortable parts of envisioning a police-free future in a gentle yet firm way.

Bodies in performance are highly symbolic, and identity and perceived identity matter greatly. For example, I should have been more aware of the impact of Hannah's voice being the first heard in *Practice*. Hannah is white and Native and reads as white to many audiences. Having the first word could be interpreted as giving Hannah, a person who already holds privilege under white supremacy, greater power in the work. The decision was made because she was the most regularly audible speaker, a significant feat given the vast outdoor setting, wind, and face masks, and I prioritized the audience being able to hear the first words confidently spoken. While this seemed like a small logistical decision at the time, I later learned that it felt significant to some audience members. This was one of many encounters with my own blindspots throughout the development of *Practice*.

As artists and audience members wrote responses to questions about their visions and fears for a world without police, distinct, often contradictory beliefs and common threads were simultaneously revealed. The slips of paper are an accumulation of collective future-visioning, a tangible outcome of the artists' dancing, speaking, and writing and the audience's reflections. For me, the responses inspire emotions ranging from frustration and anger to hope and joy at the possibilities of our future without police. The slips of paper holding visions and fears also created a tangible accumulation of our ideas, culminating in a powerful image of collective visioning and underscoring the need not for one correct way forward but many ways forward, with contributions from each of us. A transcribed version of the slips and paper as well as an image of the handwritten slips of paper collated on a large board can be found in Appendix B.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced me to be more creative in my choreography and the structure of my process. We rehearsed and performed exclusively outside, observing physical distancing and wearing masks at all times. This created a new kind of intimacy, as we started the rehearsal process in my

backyard, a typically personal, informal space, and eventually moved to a nearby park where our unpolished explorations were available for anyone to witness. Because touch was not an option, I was pushed to develop other ways of depicting community support and interdependence. Using movement signals, dynamic shifts, and our voices, we created improvisational scores designed to facilitate the group responding to calls for community support in real time.

The pandemic also provoked a change in my attitude towards virtual dance experiences and pushed me to prioritize having a quality film version of the work for audiences to experience safely at home. I feel that *Practice* was most effective when witnessed live because of the elements of audience participation, the value of communicating and having complex discussions body-to-body, and the experience of witnessing the work in a public space surrounded by daily life. However, multiple options for viewership makes the work more accessible, an important value in any work and especially in one designed to invigorate a social movement. In these ways, *Practice* explored new ways of creating and sharing dance and modeled the prioritization of community wellbeing that is central to abolition. I hope that sharing this with Twin Cities dance artists and audiences sparked ideas of ways to safely push on with art and activism through the pandemic.

Embodying Police Free Futures was a deep investigation into how dance can contribute to the police abolition movement, how abolition can be embodied and processed in white and non-Black bodies, and how live group performance can communicate alternate realities and possible futures. Central to this project were these research questions: What does police abolition require of our bodies? What does an abolitionist world feel like? What does it look like? How do we get there? What scares us about police abolition and what do we need to move forward in spite of those fears? What abolitionist models and tools already exist in our bodies, our towns, and our histories? No concrete answers were found, but the purpose of the artistic project was never to answer these questions, but rather to practice engaging the body in police abolitionist work and to add fuel to the local police abolition movement, reigniting passion and action in people with varying levels of involvement in the movement. With *Practice*, I did not succeed in producing a dance piece with which I was aesthetically or artistically satisfied. However,

product was always a secondary goal within this project, and while ideally I would be satisfied with both the process and the final shared product, I am not surprised that I felt that some quality of the work was lost as a result of my commitment to a healthy, just process. Part of this is simply time constraints. It is also related to my nervousness about asking too much of the artists I'm working with, or pushing them beyond comfort in work that is so personal and carries layers of trauma.

The performances of *Practice* succeeded in bringing people into community, creating space for reflection for audience members, and sparking conversations about police abolition in relation to movement and embodiment. Based on my discussions with audience members and my impressions of general audience response, it is clear that some audiences found value in the dedicated time for personal reflection on police abolition in a community setting, the honesty of the dancers in their voices and movement, and the rigor of dancing together, safely, through a pandemic. With the artists sharing not only their visions for a world without police but also their fears and their uncertainties about the viability of that world and the process of transitioning to that world, audiences were invited to bring their full spectrum of thoughts into the dance space, where they could be aired and processed collectively in service of moving forward for abolition. *Practice* sought to communicate that while building a world without police in the Twin Cities will not be easy nor will it solve every problem we have, it is possible and urgent.

Practice could be expanded and reimaged in multiple ways, including as a large ensemble work with the buzzing energy and drive of 20 or 30 people dancing together, as a work in partnership with community organizations and involving new artists depending on which community it was being performed in, and as a solo work diving more into the personal physicality of abolition rather than the visioning of collective solutions. Whether or not *Practice* sees a second life, abolitionist embodiment will continue to be part of my dancing practice and my activism practice. It is important to me to continue to engage with the central questions of this project regardless of whether they are explicitly stated in future works.

Appendix A

<https://vimeo.com/482819750>

Appendix B

Artists and audience members responded to these questions in *Practice*: What are your visions for police abolition? What does a world without police look like? What does it feel like? What scares you about police abolition?



Photo by Tori Breen, Nov. 2020: 40"x60" board holding artist and audience responses handwritten on slips of paper during *Practice* rehearsals or performances.

Below, each reflection from artists and audience members has been transcribed from their handwriting. I have kept the syntax, grammar, and spelling consistent with the handwritten responses except when indicated.

post-natal resources for all families/ early education/ more \$ for schools

Not using our "whiteness" as a voice for the "voiceless." They are not voiceless. We have taken their voices.

being safe and feeling safe being accountable and feeling accountable
Police abolition looks like a place where Black hope-givers aren't murdered by public-service employees
taking care of our neighbors and taking care of the earth
money goes to local solutions
Fears are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some taking advantage of freedom to commit acts of violence? - people in power refusing the will of the collective, refusing to listen
fear of violence around election time
I'm afraid of uncertainty I'm afraid of oppression finding its way into a new system. I'm afraid of individualism taking away from the needs of community.
gardens and libraries and dinners and safe places to sleep
Police abolition looks like the first point in our history since pre-colonization that our communities can develop based on academia and science instead of religion and fear
It's <u>Exhausting</u> to dig into Structural Racism Too many Black voices are drown under the Surface.
a redistribution of power
if not everyone is committed, people will continue to experience a lot of harm
I'm scared of freeriders and opportunists
Facing this creates a lot of stress. I'm afraid I'll get tired of it.
I'm afraid that the patriarchal , white structure of our society will <u>prohibit actual change</u> , and that I only contribute to that backwards stride.
trust
I simultaneously feel like I have no guidance [and] that I'm just ignorant of the guidance
raise the minimum wage... transparency in government spending and agency of the people
I'm scared for my personal safety and the safety of those who aren't used to community based safety- those who are used to calling the police
Private property + ownership thereof doesn't define community.

I fear that the human proclivity to control others would just surface with a different name. I fear militias and vigilantes
Abolishing the police means collective community organization and support: How to forge those alliances?
Diversity is not a checklist or a requirement Community is created from honest connects not conceived notions
It feels confusing but necessary. It feels scary but necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active and supportive community - Questioning systems that we think we rely on. - Investing in many forms of support, instead of expecting one organization or system to be able to address it all.
I'm afraid my friends are more concerned about "safety" than about transforming our city and working for justice for all. that they're just selfish and scared. how can I change their hearts and minds?
We never called the police, but there was always a comfort to know there was "someone" to call when things got bad. Now I worry calling the police will make it all worse. But who do I call? (This is not a ghostbusters joke)
The failure of police abolition scares me- the naysayers will be proven right.
a reckoning with history and events of the past
I hope for one day I do not hear stories of my people being deported, or have their children taken away from them. I hope for one day I violence I have seen done be accounted for.
<u>consistent community</u>
Caring through the pain not passing the pain to others to solve for us.
Love thy neighbor, but actually. And not just your similar neighbors. Not just your white, rich, school educated neighbors.
I can feel more <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of my body - Of my connection to others - Emotions
we don't have time to care for each other
people have So much to do & already. how do they keep showing up?
I am scared the fight for change will be met with more violence and not support.

We need <u>TRUST</u>
A world without police feels like you (and everyone) are free to exist and make human mistakes without your life hinging on it
Public spaces!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visions of Police Abolition are the prioritization of social workers and rehabilitation of criminals over unjust punishments - A world without police is more reliant on community action over state-sponsored policing. Action can be dependent on community needs, instead of government needs - I am scared people will miss the convenience of policing and choose convenience over justice
moving away from a focus on punishing people for “crime” + going towards redistributing resources + focusing on harm reduction for victims when necessary
Housing, jobs, education, mental health for all! New economies. Taking time to reinvision -> redistribute time + wealth -care.-
What if instead of police to “catch” people and “hold” them in custody for punishments instead we “catch” people who fall and “hold” them in compassion
addiction is decriminalized
Without police, I don’t have faith that we can police ourselves. The world seems to be what can I get out of this, instead of looking at the common good.
Non-white community leaders
I’m afraid of all the “what if’s”
in an historically unjust and unequal society with a long history of mob violence and vigilantism I feel that our society will resort to collective mob rule. We already see it with the Proud Boys!
What are the deterrents to crime?
Fear of Knowing that it will take time, patience, listening, trial + error + that many, especially those in power, will give up on it too quickly before seeing it through.
Decriminalization of drugs & addiction
24hr safe, free, cooking spaces & beds
Citizens discuss and are empowered to combat all violence, not just violent crimes. environmental justice, access to safe housing where people see themselves in their leaders and feel their well-being is

looked out for
A world without police looks and feels like a deep exhale
<p>Yes- Speak from the heart.</p> <p>Don't tell me the "right thing."</p> <p>Tell me what you're afraid of.</p> <p>Tell me what you need that you're not getting.</p> <p>Tell me what makes you angry.</p> <p>Show me that your body remembers how to grieve.</p>
Day to day life of police can be a scary, life-threatening situation. Education of public in how to approach an officer or what to do when pulled over to avoid unwarranted confrontations would be helpful.
I am afraid that after the police are abolished, another version of them will be created to "replace" them- I am afraid of not changing
more conversations
prison pipeline
<p>It hurts</p> <p>It hurts us all</p>
A power vacuum. what will police do? how will they retaliate?
<p>Equality</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Allyship</p> <p>Humanity</p> <p>Equity</p> <p>Justice</p> <p>Responsibility</p>
Fear of people fearing more than allowing trust + bonds to form
police abolition necessarily comes with massive reforms of all the other systems of power + resource holding
<p>Feels like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more people free to be themselves authentically - bodies free from surveillance
Past present & future leaders inspire me greatly
What scares me is the resistance from white people who believe their discomfort is equal to Black

unsafeness
I am afraid that we aren't a big enough group.
Reallocation of power
I'm Angry about this and I'm Scared that I can't do anything to contribute.
safety
I'm afraid that if this doesn't happen now, then how will it ever? Is that defeatist? How do we account for the future?
Who will stop the school shooters? I know this is the wrong question. How to get rid of all the guns so that no one will have to stop the school shooters?
a return to native land practices- returning to ancient methods of care and community healing
Support instead of criminalization ... at a systems and personal level -> dismantling internal biases
fears: "crime" w/out police people aren't able to respect each other (P.S. I think this is b.s. people can + <u>have</u> lived w/out police)
An end to policing bodies into liberal identity categories like race and gender- both by the government and each other.
Following + listening to each other
any fears I have are not really related to abolishing the police as it stands- the institution already fails to protect <u>people</u> . It only protects property. Where do we even start if we want to keep <u>people</u> safe? How can we strengthen out communities?
police abolition looks like getting rid of all the ways I police other people and myself
I fear that we are Abolishing before we are organizing. How do we understand that on a national level?
end of reliance on nonprofits & philanthropy
It scares me to think of those who want the power that the police structure procides... out and about
There is <u>So Much Work</u> . I'm Scared that other people aren't Motivated Enough to help Strangers

What scares me about abolition, is the people who don't want a world without violence
Once we can think + act as a community with a focus on the common good or what is best for the masses; then we might not need a police presence.
people are inherently valued/valuable
need for more community healing spaces
As I watch I see the words STOP + DO NOT ENTER. I think about hard surfaces + wish for more softness. This makes me think of current policing models as hard surfaces. Dancing bodies are an antidote.
Accountability with restoration restoration with care, empathy awareness of history
A lack of civil engagement from community. A rash of militias & white supremacists massively stock piling arms & taking matters into their own hands.
kids get support rather than suspension
we need to stop criminalizing poverty + equating wealth w/ moral righteousness
It's not just the police who police. How do we address individual responsibility to overcome false attack and accusation?
New=scary Exploring our "new normal" in real time
Police precincts would be replaced by public squares, fardens, urban farms, playgrounds, and forests
A world where people help each other
prison pipeline
largest emphasis on generosity, acting from a place not of ownership but stewardship responsibility + justice
-> Police are not a tool for safety. They are a tool to enforce the will of the powerful. Reimagining them is the first step to create a more fair world. -> A world without power enforcement would by necessity be a world of collectives. -> To abolish police we all must step up to fill those roles. I worry we all will not be able to handle this responsibility.
I want to rest so bad

Scared I'll make the easy choice. Don't know how.
The wealth elite wouldn't extract so much, instead... they would put more back into community because the laws would not shield them any longer. mutual aid is a form of wealth redistribution.
many different voices some heard some unheard
I love thinking I would know who to call when there is someone who needs help I cannot give
I envision more constructive communication and collaboration for the safety and wellbeing of all.
how to sustain this movement during the pandemic
more resources to support communities, more/varied training to support communities
Yes, but only to a point. We need people to enforce unethical things like murder, rape, theft, and fraud.
what/who will protect the people?
do (white) people care enough?
a legislative revolution- a shift in who gets to come to the table
letting go of the desire for stability
Non anxious stops for failed taillights
I am nervous for when things get worse before they get better
It feels like less pain and mourning of the deaths of more Black individuals killed by police.
We need welcoming stronger neighborhoods
defund the police
Will the US lead abolition or will we wait for someone else to do it for us?
rest is valued
abolition involves every part of our personal and societal lives
End of Billionaires
The resistance to police abolition scares me- militant citizenship- can it be different?
families!

<p>Hopeful + Humbled.</p> <p>The power, success will require messy work together.</p>
<p>Regulation + Calm + Breath come from within. People can feel + acknowledge their own bodies + other bodies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for education - Funding for better futures for people of color and specifically the black communities
<p>Space for individualism.</p> <p>Trust for + in individualism</p>
<p>It looks like citizens working together.</p>
<p>get rid of officers that cross the line. Help those [who] have anger issues, racial biases, control issues. more positive media on police as our advocates + not our enemies. not all cops are bad.</p>
<p>more numbers to call- stop relying on the police for help when others can do it better</p>
<p>My white body has not felt harmed by police. will crime increase?</p>
<p>community self-rule & self-determination</p>
<p>If we all cared for each others' needs, physical, mental, and emotional, police would become obsolete</p>
<p>w/o police:</p> <p>Real security, More responsibility, Autonomy. Empathy for all.</p>
<p>world w/out police looks + feels like white suburbs currently</p>
<p>I fear the human ego, the freed and the lack of empathy</p>
<p>Fear of people Buying more guns</p>
<p>freedom to express</p> <p>free</p>
<p>safety... not contingent on my whiteness</p>
<p>Race is so directly related to abolition</p>
<p>A world with police abolition feels equitably and by each member of the community each person's investment in their community maintains it and helps it grow.</p>
<p>I'm so tired</p> <p>guilt</p> <p>Set up and try again</p>

Abolishing the police looks like children not being afraid to go to school or act against the grain
community control power in the community
how do we keep this momentum
Will the “Post Police” order in the US be led by white people? Will nothing actually change?
People are valued over property
burnout
Focus on what people need instead of what they deserve- because everyone deserves everything they need
Fund mental health care- prioritize mental health care and reduce stigma of mental health needs
I fear that we are too divided as a people/country to abolish police. I can see what it would be like to have harmony + dream it- people we <u>actually</u> cared for. Have help + support not violence + fear
Does abolishing the police start w/ the police? Do we need to abolish the system?
I dream of a world where young people can dance about joy and love, where we’re not shifting responsibility and care for big issues onto them because old adults and leaders are irresponsible and selfish and have given up on a just future
Abolition looks like care, mutual aid, community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More violence - Fear that leads to violence
You know what to do and who to call if you walk past a suffering person.
unity, mutual respect
Visions of peace, togetherness, listening, balance, space. Embracing differences of shared humanity, not fearing them.
I am afraid of New inequalities that may be formed
I’m afraid that some people might exploit this for their own interests.
Black children playing freely
It looks like white supremacy is revealed and its ties in our government systems targeted and dissolved.
I’m scared it will fail and that the backlash will be harsh.

feels like everyone showing up in their wholeness + being seen as such
<p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listening + talking with neighbors - enough for everyone - structural change over charity - less fear, not more
People taking advantage of police abolition to do more harm instead of good
I think of the young people in my family both brown and black and I hope to see their world to not hurt them. That they will not be as effect as the last generation.
reclaiming neighborhoods/communities
Too much power is involved in this matter. It's SO HARD to tear it down.
It feels more loving, open, joyous.
mental illness is decriminalized
I see fewer power and fear driven intimidation tactics.
police abolition feels like freedom without fear
So valuable the land upon we stand to some money & to some place
Alone Together Pain
<p>Redistribution of power</p> <p>Redistribution of wealth</p>
justice is reached through restorative & transformative justice practices
so many communities already have safety/support systems because the police never served them
A world without police feels like community protecting each other
how do I balance self-preservation & my privilege as a white body @ protests
people are able to meet their basic needs
I am scared that we all- in this country- carry so much fragmentation + isolation in our cells at this point... from our ancestors, from our movements, from our many attempts to survive by cutting off fragments of ourselves... that we may not remember what interdependence + care even feel like
access to resources

There is no blood on the ground on which we walk
My vision for police abolition is a world where I do not fear for my brothers and sisters trying to get by., Where getting pulled over doesn't make them fear for their lives.
I am afraid of the attention I get for speaking out. I am doing the minimum
More Art, more life, more color, in over-policed areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does it look like? - Better communal resources, safety based on love + trust not on fear
Burnout that leads to Apathy
We know our neighbors
BIG LISTENING and a little talking
I'm afraid of how long things may take to change.
I'm worried that the big bad wolf of capitalism is too big to conquer- can we know democracy without capitalism?
I'm afraid that I'm not doing anything that matters, How do I apply my skills, my brain, my personality?
what responses can we have that do not perpetuate violence?
<p>Momentary unity</p> <p>Build on it</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant self-reflection - Completely rethinking what we view as disruptive - More equitable distribution of wealth - Equitable and anti-racist education systems.
I want to feel safe and police is NOT making me feel safe [angry face]!
But I fear abolition could go in the wrong hands. that our hopes of community fade as freed spills in.
I am worried about dwindling numbers
Closer and stronger
A robust investment in community that envisions support & nurturing w/out a fixation on penalizing targeted communities.
Dismantling generations of fear and injustice

hope
There's Much Hatred in this movement I am TIRED
homelessness is decriminalized
sacred spaces
Calling neighbors for help Calling a communal committee?
We need end to the systems that
I hope that by defunding the police, we put that money in to Education, healthcare, and more community building needs.
one short term action I commit to is becoming Narcan trained and carrying Narcan
Racism (anti-blackness) is the root of most issues
I am afraid there won't be a lot of people on our side
a world where our neighbors- all neighbors- feel safe. regardless of race, income, education, gender. not just those born into privilege.
I feel like I can't do much. I feel small and don't have much to contribute.
decriminalization of homelessness. It is Not a Crime!
White people have less property Property is questioned Possession is questioned
Who will help me if I'm attacked? or a victim of a crime?
What scares you about police abolition? Nothing.
one long term action I commit to is not being a cop in teachers' clothing- embodying care, not fear, in the classroom
Community care is vital!
It feels connected It's filled with respect It's how this world should be

burn out is so real & so scary
Defund the Police. They are murderers.
systemic and legislative change
transition period
Legitimate social welfare and security for all
What would it look like if we responded to one another with love?
A world without police looks healthier and more loving, with more people investing in our children and creating robust health infrastructure and comprehensive arts and programming, free healthy eating stations, etc etc
Does police abolition scare me? When the presence of police is scary in many realities? - the re-allocating of funds from police towards resources that support the needs of communities who live the realities that system racism inacts
Moving from punishment to problem-solving, community problem solving
We can keep each other safe!
I'm excited for what we can do.
Radical Love!
A world without police feels connected and mutually understood
I am worried about apathy
rules help guide us, not punish us
I'm scared that we may fail to abolish the police, in this moment, and that I won't live to see another "moment"
death of capitalism
Hollistic Communities
I hope that people can just Respect others!
less unmet need
access to community

Afraid of moving into an unfamiliar world, even if it is one I feel is necessary
how do you raise an abolitionist child?
listening to our neighbors, believing and listening to their needs and stories
seeing neighbors, not watching neighbors
Safety for everyone
being queer & gnc is scary but these are all things that I can hide
Community Gardens that are open to anyone & everyone
Healing
life over property ALWAYS
Discomfort vs unsafe - am I unsafe or am I unwilling to be uncomfortable?
breath
I am excited to continue to unlearn white-supremacy
mutual aid & security
Justice for the Black & indigenous communities
I'm afraid that our government will never allow for real change and what that means
I envision a world where we all feel safe
have need see need respond to need- after school programs! pre-k! affordable housing! healthcare!
scared of how long it will take
laws that work for people, not profit or property
Losing more security because of lack of governmental support
Police held accountable for their actions. No one is above the law. But also the "law" needs to be changed

Works Cited

- "About." *A Moment of Silence: 50+ Black MN Voices in a Historical Moment of Transformation*, Tru Ruts, 2020, blackmnvoices.com/about.
- "About." *MPD150*, 8 Sept. 2020, www.mpd150.com/about/.
- "About Reclaim the Block." *Reclaim the Block*, 2019, www.reclaimtheblock.org/.
- "About the Project." *Behind the Blue Line*, www.bluelinemn.org/about-the-project/.
- Associated Press. "Police Officers Not Charged for Killing Breonna Taylor." *POLITICO*, POLITICO, 23 Sept. 2020, www.politico.com/news/2020/09/23/grand-jury-indicts-police-officer-breonna-taylor-death-420606.
- brown, adrienne maree. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. AK Press, 2017.
- Burke, Siobhan. "Dancing Bodies That Proclaim: Black Lives Matter." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 9 June 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/06/09/arts/dance/dancing-protests-george-floyd.html.
- Chappell, Bill. "Former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin Is Released On \$1 Million Bond." *NPR*, NPR, 7 Oct. 2020, www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racial-justice/2020/10/07/921213607/derek-chauvin-is-released-on-1-million-bail-bond.
- Cineas, Fabiola. "What the Public Is Getting Right - and Wrong - about Police Abolition." *Vox*, Vox, 30 Oct. 2020, www.vox.com/21529335/abolish-the-police-movement.
- Florida, Adrian. "These Are The Minneapolis Activists Leading The Push To Abolish The Police." *NPR*, NPR, 26 June 2020, www.npr.org/2020/06/26/882001628/these-are-the-minneapolis-activists-leading-the-push-to-abolish-the-police.
- Friedler, Delilah, and Camille Squires. "The Revolution Is in the Streets-and It Slaps." *Mother Jones*, 12 June 2020, www.motherjones.com/anti-racism-police-protest/2020/06/protest-police-brutality-dance-joy/.
- MPD150. *Enough Is Enough: A 150-Year Performance Review of the Minneapolis Police Department*, MPD150, 2020.
- "Nina Simone: An Artist's Duty." Performance by Nina Simone, *YouTube*, 21 Feb. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=99V0mMNf5fo&feature=youtu.be.
- Nonko, Emily. "The Minneapolis Group That's Been Calling for Police Abolition Since 2016." *Next City*, 24 June 2020, nextcity.org/daily/entry/the-minneapolis-group-thats-been-calling-for-police-abolition-since-2016.

Northside Achievement Zone. "Northside Achievement Zone's 'ONE WEEK FOR ONE FUTURE-AND STILL I RISE' Virtual Program." *Issuu*, 13 Nov. 2020, issuu.com/northsideachievementzone/docs/prg_5.625x8.75_naz_1wk41fut_201022_4-singles.

Park, MiRi. *Dance Protest List June-July 2020*, 2020, docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1CWZo8w3Z_J_zSVAVcQNp8q3pnEWN8HSQpPQeAPFiB8Q/mobilebasic.

Reclaim the Block and Black Visions Collective. "Defund Police: What comes next? Reclaim the Block." 12 Jul. 2020. Webinar.

STRONGmovement. "NAZ x STRONGmovement: 'We Rise.'" *Facebook*, 23 Nov. 2020, www.facebook.com/watch/?v=294067525190732.

Turtinen, Melissa. "Minneapolis City Council Approves Additional Funding for MPD." *Bring Me The News*, Bring Me The News, 13 Nov. 2020, bringmethenews.com/minnesota-news/minneapolis-city-council-approves-additional-funding-for-mpd.